

2000 Status Report

To the Governor and the General Assembly

The Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education

Reform of Postsecondary Education

Though rapid in recent years, the pace of change and improvement quickened at Kentucky's colleges and universities. Thanks to increasing cooperation, they have begun to resemble the true system the governor and General Assembly envisioned to serve Kentucky when they approved landmark legislation in 1997. Public awareness of the need for more and better education has broadened and deepened. Seemingly, so has support for reform. Our people and institutions know that a brighter future for Kentucky depends on learning – learning that begins long before kindergarten and continues throughout life, learning that leads to marketable ideas, good jobs, and satisfying lives. To promote more effectively the well being of all Kentuckians, the Council took on new responsibilities – notably, adult education and the knowledge-based economy – and new partners.

Adult Education

The 2000 General Assembly approved legislation (Senate Bill 1) to improve and expand education for the nearly 1 million Kentuckians – 40 percent of the working-age population – who struggle to read, write, and do arithmetic if they can at all. Adult-education programs serve only 50,000 residents. Under the legislation, the Council works closely with the Workforce Development Cabinet's Department for Adult Education and Literacy. Cheryl King, department commissioner, is now also an associate vice president at the Council. Consulting with other agencies and after workshops around the state, the Council has crafted a comprehensive plan to increase the number of Kentuckians in adult-education programs to 100,000 by 2004 and to 300,000 by 2010. As undereducated adults improve basic skills, they become eligible for better jobs and postsecondary education. Success of the push for more and better adult education will be gauged by answering these questions: Are more Kentuckians participating in adult-education programs? Are these adult learners meeting education goals? Are more adult learners advancing on to postsecondary education? Are more adult learners being prepared for the continually changing workplace? Are Kentucky's communities and economy benefiting?

The New Economy

The Council helped draft and implement the Kentucky Innovation Act (House Bill 572), approved by the 2000 General Assembly and creating the Kentucky Innovation Commission and a commissioner for the new economy. The new law established funds to connect small and medium-size businesses with Kentucky universities to develop research and related commercial uses. The Council is contracting with the private,

nonprofit Kentucky Science & Technology Corp. to create and manage the Kentucky Science and Engineering Foundation, coordinate a program to stimulate research, and perform an audit of Kentucky's entrepreneurial capacity. The Council also is the statewide coordinator for the Kentucky trade delegation to the Biotechnology Industry Organization's 2001 conference in San Diego.

Engineering Education

Engineers and engineering are critical to economic development, but Kentucky is at or near the bottom in the number of engineers and engineering graduates. To develop more engineers, the Council initiated and coordinated a strategy for statewide engineering education in Kentucky. All university presidents have endorsed the plan. Beginning in fall 2001, Western Kentucky University, working with existing programs at the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville, will offer engineering degrees to its students. Feeding the institutions will be two-year programs in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. Murray State University is working toward similar arrangements with the two research universities.

Program Productivity

Universities said they would end more than 100 programs that produce few graduates and would review a similar number. The Council encouraged institutions to close or combine programs – perhaps with those elsewhere – or look for other ways to strengthen them and make them more appealing to students, and their graduates more attractive to employers.

Deregulation of Program Approval

New academic programs proposed by institutions and falling within “bands” or areas designated by the Council no longer must come before the Council for formal approval. Instead, under the Kentucky Postsecondary Program Proposal System, they are posted to a Web site for 45 days for review and comment. If requirements are met and any opposition resolved, the institution may begin the process of implementing it. Programs outside the bands – and medicine, dentistry, dental, teacher education, doctoral studies – continue to be reviewed and considered by the Council.

New Academic Programs

Two dozen new university programs of study were approved, both undergraduate and graduate. They ranged from a doctorate in civil engineering to a master's in computer science to a bachelor's in industrial technology. Scores of new KCTCS programs were approved, most of them associate's degrees at technical colleges.

Programs of Distinction

The Council approved the Center for 21st Century Media as the second program of distinction at Western Kentucky University. The center, partly by stressing electronic publishing and the Internet, will expand and enrich the teaching, research, and outreach of WKU's respected School of Journalism and Broadcasting. Western's other program of distinction is in applied research and technology. All six comprehensive universities have programs of distinction, specialties for which institutions develop national reputations.

Policy Leadership

As part of its role as a catalyst and partner for change and improvement, the Council and its staff worked with institutions and others on a variety of conferences around the Commonwealth. Besides the annual gathering for trustees and regents, these included conferences on campus diversity, teacher education, faculty development, remedial education, engineering education, student retention, and the senior year in high school. All were intended to broaden and improve learning to help Kentucky reach reform goals. Also, in addition to coordinating Kentucky's involvement in the 2001 biotechnology conference in San Diego, the Council is developing the education component of the governor's conference in January 2001 in Louisville to promote economic and cultural ties to Latin America. Council staff have spoken and otherwise participated in conferences around the country and in England and France. Council staff arranged extensive tours of the Kentucky postsecondary-education landscape for visiting journalists and, with a big assist from KCTCS, out-of-state educators, including one from England.

Kentucky Community and Technical College System

In its third full year, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System increased enrollment from fall 1999 to fall 2000 by 13.4 percent to more than 52,000 students, full and part time. The KCTCS attributed the record rise in large part to more degree programs, including those offered through the Kentucky Virtual University, and greater emphasis on recruiting and retaining students. Programs in computers and information technology are among the most popular. Recruiting includes KCTCS students' telephoning high school students to stress the importance of going to college. Working with Rotary Clubs throughout Kentucky, the KCTCS hosts campus visits by high school juniors. With \$12 million from the Workforce Development Trust Fund and its matching dollars, the KCTCS is evaluating and training workers for industry. Part of this effort is the Kentucky Workforce Investment Network System of field positions, workforce data collection and tracking systems. KY WINS has helped persuade companies to move to Kentucky or start here, creating nearly 1,300 jobs paying a third more, on average, than the prevailing wage. Teaming up with private Midway College, Central Kentucky Technical College and Lexington Community College will offer courses to United Parcel Service employees at the company's distribution center in Lexington. The KCTCS Board of Regents has approved the organization of the 28 community and technical colleges into 16 districts. The board and President Michael B. McCall continue to support consolidation of programs, functions and services at community and technical colleges where local citizens and civic and business leaders support those changes. A new community and technical college has been authorized for northern Kentucky. The KCTCS also continues to work with comprehensive universities to develop regional education centers: Southeast (London, Corbin, Somerset), Northeast (Prestonsburg), South (Glasgow), Central (Elizabethtown), and West (Hopkinsville).

Kentucky Virtual University

Continuing the most successful startup of a consortium cyber university, KYVU enrollment rose ten-fold to nearly 2,400 students (many taking more than one course) as it entered just its second year. More than half are older than traditional college-going age; nearly two-thirds are women. Contributing to the increase is the popularity of a new Web-based associate's degree offered by KCTCS. A full-blown marketing campaign included renaming the Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual University and creating new promotional materials. KYVU also continued to draw national attention in magazines and newspapers, thanks in part to its virtual football team, the @vengers, and its innovative use of loans to help Kentucky professors and colleges and universities design online projects. For convenience, KYVU now has a common application and one admissions fee for its prospective students, who actually enroll at home institutions. KYVU has established a noncredit division to provide professional training and certification. The virtual university conducted a conference in Lexington for chief executive officers of similar enterprises in Canada and Latin America as well as the United States. The three dozen participants agreed to push for easier transfer among virtual universities. KYVU is becoming a partner with Monterrey Technical Virtual University in Mexico to offer courses in Spanish; this arrangement will be highlighted at the governor's conference in January 2001 on Latin America. The Kentucky Virtual High School, in its first year, allows students to take challenging courses not otherwise available.

Kentucky Virtual Library

In its first year, KYVL not only began offering a broad array of materials online – including full text of thousands of journals, magazines, and newspapers as well as indexes and abstracts (and database descriptions in Spanish) – but it strengthened library services throughout the state. Libraries big and small, in rural communities and at urban institutions, benefit from the sophistication and coordination that KYVL promotes and can provide cost effectively. At no cost to individual users, KYVL has begun a ground courier service that whisks books and other publications from one library to another all over the Commonwealth. KYVL also has created a Website to assist teachers. It is developing another to help students, especially young ones, conduct research online. The virtual library makes special collections and archives about Kentucky – old documents, vintage photographs, video and sound interviews with major figures of the past – available to all residents. KYVL and three libraries will be featured in the latest annual report of the Online Computer Library Center, which goes out to its thousands of members worldwide.

Funding for Public Postsecondary Education

The 2000 General Assembly approved a budget for postsecondary education that closely resembled what the Council proposed and the governor recommended. The increase in spending over the biennium was historically large, nearly 20 percent. After the legislative session, the Council invited the Strategic Committee on Postsecondary Education to form a subcommittee to review the underpinnings of the Council's funding recommendations – notably, qualifying for trust-fund money and relying on benchmark institutions around the country. Separately, the institutions' presidents and Council staff discussed these

concerns and reached a general consensus, endorsed by members of the SCOPE subcommittee, that reaffirmed but refined the use of the funding criteria. In their “Points of Consensus,” the staff and presidents agreed that incentive trust funds, sometimes described as the rudder that guides the ship of reform, “should be maintained.” They also agreed to retain “the benchmarking concept” as a way to set base levels of funding for institutions. The presidents and the Council staff will continue to work out details. The Council retains final responsibility to set the approach to budgeting and to prepare a consolidated postsecondary-education budget for consideration by the governor and General Assembly.

Endowment Program

The 2000 General Assembly also renewed the \$100 million in “bucks for brains” endowment matching money for the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville and doubled matching dollars for comprehensive universities from \$10 million to \$20 million. The action brought to \$230 million the total appropriated for four years for endowed positions and related expenses. UK has more than tripled its endowed chairs from 21 to 66 and has nearly tripled its endowed professorships (from 45 to 126). UofL has nearly doubled its endowed chairs (from 26 to 46) and has increased professorships from 10 to 14. Both emphasized science in creating the new positions. Most of the comprehensive universities have matched their first-biennium allocation and created endowed positions.

P-16 Council

During its first year, the P-16 Council supported efforts to improve teacher preparation and professional development (teacher academies, tracking education and placement of instructors), bring colleges and high schools into line on what to expect of students, and raise the college-going rate. The advisory P-16 Council (preschool through college) is composed mostly of members of the State Board of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education. Two members were added to represent the Education Professional Standards Board. The P-16 Council helped assemble teams of educators to develop standards for college readiness in writing and math and to suggest changes in curriculum – all to reduce the large proportion of first-year college students needing remedial classes. The P-16 Council also coordinated a successful application for a \$10-million federal GEAR UP grant (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) to persuade and help disadvantaged middle-school students and their families to prepare for college. State dollars will match the federal contribution. In its second year, the P-16 Council will focus on the development of local P-16 councils.

Systemwide Assessment and Placement (Remedial Courses)

The Council implemented a policy it approved in late 1999 establishing a minimum standard for placing students in appropriate levels of courses in English, math, and reading. The policy emphasizes placement based on what a student knows – not just the completion of certain courses in high school. It reflects comment by the institutions’ chief academic officers and Kentucky Department of Education staff.

Communications Campaign

The Council on Postsecondary Education, advised by experts on sampling and shaping public opinion, is developing an ambitious campaign to promote the benefits of education. It will build on the momentum established by Governor Patton's "Education Pays" initiative, coordinating state activities meant to increase opportunity in Kentucky.

Key Indicators and "The Five Questions"

How will we know whether reform is achieving goals in the Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997 (House Bill 1), *2020 Vision*, and the Action Agenda? The Council on Postsecondary Education has posed five questions, which were featured at the annual conference for trustees and regents: Are more Kentuckians ready for college? Are more students enrolling? Are more students advancing through the system? Are Kentuckians prepared for life and work? Are Kentucky's communities and economy benefiting? The answer to each question will comprise key performance indicators that the Council is devising in consultation with educators, government officials, business and civic leaders, and other advisers in Kentucky and the nation.

The National State-by-State Report Card

Kentucky received generally low grades – but was cited as "a state to watch" as reforms take hold – in "Measuring Up 2000," a report on how well each state provides postsecondary education and how much each benefits. The highly publicized assessment, by the nonprofit, nonpartisan National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, will be updated every two years. Kentucky's highest grade, a B, was for affordability. The commonwealth received a C for preparation of students for college, a C minus for college graduation rates, a D for college-going rates, and another D – reflecting, in part, low college-going and completion rates – for the economic and social benefits that Kentucky receives from college-educated adults. The most recent data available for the survey was at least two years old, before any effects of the reforms approved in 1997 could be evident. In identifying Kentucky as a state to watch, the report predicted that its grades would rise as reforms were implemented and matured.

Our System: Profile – and More About Performance

- Kentucky's system of public postsecondary education is composed of eight public universities (six comprehensive and two research), Lexington Community College, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (28 community and technical colleges in 16 districts) and the Kentucky Virtual University. Twenty independent colleges and universities also provide postsecondary education.
- Of Kentucky's 120 counties, 112 contain a postsecondary institution or are adjacent to a county with a postsecondary institution.
- Nearly three-fourths of university students are full time. About half of the students at the community and technical colleges attend classes full time.

- One in four university undergraduates is 25 years of age or older. Nearly half of the community college population is of nontraditional age.
- Kentucky ranks 48th among states in the percentage of its adult population with a high school diploma.
- Only 53 percent of Kentucky's 1998 high school graduates attended college during the fall semester following their graduation. The U.S. college-going rate for the class of 1997 was 65.4 percent. Based on projections by the RAND Corp., Kentucky's postsecondary education system must have 80,000 more undergraduate students by 2020 to reach the national average for college going.
- Kentucky ranks 42nd in the percentage of adults who have earned a bachelor's degree. (Of every 20 students who get to the ninth grade – not all do – 14 receive diplomas, seven go right on to college, and only three who enroll in Kentucky universities graduate within six years.)
- Of 2.4 million Kentuckians of working age, 1 million read and do arithmetic poorly, if at all. The Council has set an objective of 300,000 people enrolled in adult education by 2010. It will seek to increase enrollment from 50,000 now to 100,000 by 2004.

Students – and Their Progress

- **Enrollment.** From fall 1999 to fall 2000, official enrollment, full and part time, at all Kentucky publicly supported colleges and universities rose nearly 5 percent to 144,300. The number of students increased at most institutions, including, as noted above, at the Kentucky Community and Technical College System. Experiencing declines were Kentucky State University (5.8 percent overall, 8.9 percent full time), Eastern Kentucky University (3.5 percent overall, 3.6 percent full time), and the University of Louisville, where, partly reflecting new policies, the number of full-time students increased slightly and the number of part-time students went down.
- **Retention.** In 2000, the percentage of first-time freshmen returning for a second year at Kentucky's eight public universities ranged from 61 percent to 80 percent. For 1999, the latest year available, ACT Inc. reported that 72 percent of students attending public four-year institutions and 74 percent of students attending all four-year institutions returned for a second year. The one-year retention rate at the KCTCS was 54 percent. ACT reports that 55 percent of students attending two-year institutions returned for a second year in 1999.
- **Transfer.** In fall 2000, 2,305 community-college students transferred to one of the eight public universities – down 8.7 percent from the year before. Over the past five years, transfers declined 12.2 percent.

- **Graduation.** In 2000, the percentage of first-time, full-time baccalaureate students who graduated within six years ranged from 30 percent to 55.3 percent at the eight public universities. The average is 42.1 percent, up from 39.3 percent in 1999. Nationwide, ACT Inc. reported that for 1999, 42.2 percent of students attending public four-year institutions and 51.6 percent of students attending all four-year institutions graduated within *five* years. The five-year graduation rate for Kentucky community college students who transferred with 30 or more credit hours was 61.8 percent.

Equal Opportunities

- *The Kentucky Plan 1997-2002* is the third stage of desegregation and equal opportunity planning that began in 1982. The plan requires tracking of minorities in undergraduate and graduate enrollments, retention of freshmen and all undergraduates, bachelor's degrees conferred, and employment of faculty and staff. Kentucky lags notably in graduating resident African Americans (26 percent versus 44 percent for whites: the six-year rate for those who first enrolled in 1993) and in enrolling resident African Americans in graduate and professional programs.
- The Council entered into a partnership with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education to bring Kentucky into full compliance with Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the Fordice standards. The Office for Civil Rights and the Council's Committee on Equal Opportunities visited the eight publicly supported universities to monitor progress. Separately, the Council concluded in a status report that some universities are moving more rapidly than others.
- An institution's eligibility to submit proposals for new academic programs is tied to its progress toward achieving equal-opportunity objectives. Seven of the eight publicly supported universities and half of the 14 community colleges could seek approval of new programs in 2000 without asking for a waiver of sanctions. Four community colleges were not eligible for waivers.